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### Our Purpose

“Two possibilities exist:

Either we are alone in the Universe or we are not.

Both are equally terrifying.”

- Arthur C Clarke

As human beings, we thrive from social experiences to feel as though we are never alone. This idea of isolation seems almost impossible to fathom considering we live on a planet that hosts eight billion people. However, eight billion is just another number compared to the trillions of planets that exist in the universe. Earth is no larger than a water molecule in an endless ocean that is the universe. Therefore, the contributions made by humans seem almost insignificant considering the fact that we have only changed the way we have lived on our own planet. So if humans are infinitesimally small, what is the purpose of living if our contributions only affect the surrounding microcosm we live in? The answer lies in the question itself; it is because humans are human. This human element makes us unique and more than just interconnected molecules. Humans are in a neverending quest to find the purpose in their lives, even if that purpose is not on a universal scale. To define a human's true purpose is not a simple task. Humans will always find a purpose even if they subconsciously know their life is insignificant on a much larger scale.

A need for control can be defined as the journey in finding meaning for everything. We need to know everything to have a sense of control over our situation. One example of this concept can be seen through the belief of superstition. Superstition is the belief that a specific act will trigger a desirable outcome. Our brains are developed in believing that some acts may have a positive outcome. This was proven by B.F. Skinner and his experiments involving pigeons. Skinner studied the idea of superstition

and how it provides us with false hope. These behaviors can produce a feeling of strength and control when a person is facing a difficult situation. With control over the situation, it gives us a sense of purpose. In other words, a sense of control over our surrounding environment. Even with the great scientist Gregor Mendel, the drive to control is seen in his attempts to answer the question how our traits are formed. He performed various experiments with pea plants, and formed many theories about genetics. Along with Mendel there were other great scientists who helped form an idea of how our world works. With all the new information acquired, humans can be seen to have more control over their environment. Even though humans have proved observations with hard data, some have gone to a point where stories are fabricated. However these stories are just beliefs and cannot be treated as answers. The hindu religion describes the purpose of life in four words, Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha. The basic meaning of these four words can be summed up in four words as well, purpose, prosperity, desire, and enlightenment. I agree with the ideologies presented from these words, however the stories that are made to reinforce them are nonsense. This is where part of humanity falls short. I believe faith is used as an escape to describe what we can't comprehend ourselves. However, Hinduism is not the only religion formed, there have been many others with a common goal of defining the purpose to life. As humans we are scared of what we don't know, but there are a few who are not. There was Newton who provided us with the three Universal Laws of Motion, Werner Heisenberg who described the movements of atoms, Ludwig Boltzmann who shaped Thermodynamics to as we know it today, and Louis Victor de Broglie who was the mind behind the Wave Particle Duality theory. These are just a few scientists who have helped humans get a better grasp in understanding the purpose of their existence. As seen in history no matter what, humans will make conscious effort to find control over every situation.

Survival can be seen the most essential in defining our purpose. However the idea of survival cannot be specified to humans alone, instead we must look at the bigger picture and all the organisms that are involved. Planet Earth has encountered more than half a dozen instances where it faced near extinction. Although in every single one of those instance there was biological life forms that found a way to adapt. The ability for organisms to adapt and change to their surrounding is a remarkable feat. The first living organisms were microbes called cyanobacteria which through billions of years evolved to humans. The evolution was in result of many successful battles against extinction We are seen constantly changing ourselves as well as our environments in attempt provide a meaning to our existence. As humans we are incredibly talented at destroying lifeforms, but we are also experts at preserving them. All our attempts whether we think it or not, is to provide a meaning to our lives. In the context of the universe, our lives seem insignificant; but the struggle that we face everyday as a species each day, provide meaning to our existence.

In a general sense, personal satisfaction is an individual's ability to feel content and happy. These two characteristics inherently make life worth living because without emotions like these the world would be shades of gray. A human's ability to feel happiness and contented is what makes life worth living. However, these two traits are not attained easily and are specific to each individual that lives on this planet. For example, an adult living in a modern society might find happiness in having a job and spending time with his family; on the other hand, a homeless individual might find happiness in having a warm meal and clean clothes. It is our drive to fulfill this need for satisfaction that keeps us going. It is interesting to think that although we know that we are going to suffer the same fate, the majority of us humans, about 8 billion, can find about 8 billion reasons to live another day.

Human characteristics and motives are very hard to define. Each person has different ideologies,

but all of them strive for personal satisfaction, need for control, and the struggle for survival. As mentioned before, whatever humans have accomplished, and will accomplish will not have an effect on the bigger picture. We can only hope the changes we make impact the microcosm we live in and give us a meaning to our existence. Our species is very diverse and intelligent, and what we have accomplished is truly extraordinary; but does it really matter?